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INFO RUEHWH/WESTERN HEMISPHERIC AFFAIRS DIPL POSTS IMMEDIATE  
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UNCLAS SECTION 01 OF 02 TEGUCIGALPA 000867

SENSITIVE  
SIPDIS

STATE FOR WHA/CEN

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [CASC](#) [MARR](#) [KDEM](#) [PHUM](#) [ASEC](#) [HO](#)

SUBJECT: TFH01: HONDURAS COUP: LOCAL PRESS WRAP-UP  
09/01/2009

REF: TEGUCIGALPA 844 AND OTHERS

11. (U) Summary. This is a round-up of local news reported in major Honduran dailies from August 29 through September 1. End Summary.

12. (U) "El Heraldito," "La Prensa," and "La Tribuna" September 1 report that Venezuelan President Chavez admits it is highly unlikely that President Zelaya will return to power, especially given that presidential campaigning in Honduras has begun. Chavez states that the US and other international institutions are using the rhetoric of democracy but that their real interests lie in preventing Zelaya from returning to office.

13. (U) "El Heraldito" September 1 states that the US State Department has confirmed that Honduras may not be kicked out of CAFTA-DR. In the opinion section of a local paper on August 28, the call by Dominican Republic President Leonel Fernandez for Honduras' removal from CAFTA-DR is portrayed as a ploy for economic advantage for his country.

14. (U) "El Heraldito" September 1 reports that Paraguay has joined the list of countries that no longer recognize the Honduran Ambassador, Carmen Eleonora Ortez Williams. The others, as reported in the local press, are the US, Uruguay, Nicaragua, Costa Rica, Belgium and Argentina.

15. (U) "La Prensa" September 1 reports that a civic movement called "Honduras is ours" has called for a demonstration at 11:00 local (13:00 EDT) Friday September 4 to "say 'No' to chavista doctrines." Gerardo Aguero, the movement's coordinator, states in the press that "Honduras' problem was that Chavez wanted to control our country through Zelaya, and this is why we must demonstrate and defend self-determination in our country."

16. (U) "El Heraldito" September 1 reports President Zelaya traveled to Washington for the fifth time today since the June 28 coup, and that he will meet privately with OAS President Insulza on Tuesday afternoon, followed by a meeting with the OAS Permanent Council. Although "La Tribuna" August 31 stated that Zelaya said he did not plan on visiting the State Department while in Washington, "La Prensa" September 1 reports that he will meet with the Secretary on Thursday

September 4. "El Herald" also reports that that Zelaya is going to the US at a time when U.S. policy makers are deciding whether or not to determine that the events of June 28 were a military coup and formally cut off assistance to Honduras.

¶7. (U) "El Tiempo" August 31 included a reaction from Amilcar Bulnes, President of the Consejo Hondureno de la Empresa Privada (COHEP), which represents the interests of private businesses in Honduras, to a motion brought by National Party Congress Member Carlos Kattan on August 25 to consider the possibility of Honduras withdrawing from the Bolivarian Alternative for the Americas (ALBA) treaty. President Zelaya signed onto ALBA in August, 2008, and the treaty was ratified by the Micheletti-led Congress the following October. Bulnes argues that Honduran exports to Venezuela, including milk and processed meat, would suffer.

¶8. (U) "La Tribuna" and "El Herald" August 29 reported that the Honduran delegation of the de facto regime made their third visit to Washington to suggest that both Micheletti and President Zelaya step aside and allow a third party to take over the presidency until a new president is elected and sworn in. "La Tribuna" reported that former Honduran Ambassador to the OAS, Carlos Sosa, denied this possibility and stated that the suggestion for a third party is merely a way for the de facto government to buy time and give the appearance that both sides are talking. Furthermore, "La Tribuna" stated that Sosa had planned to circulate a petition to the 33 member states of the OAS declaring that they will not recognize the November 29 presidential elections in Honduras.

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¶9. (U) Local press August 29 reported that Honduras' participation in Plan Trifinio - a tri-country development plan among Guatemala, El Salvador and Honduras to promote development, investment and economic growth in 45 municipalities spread across all three countries ) is currently frozen.

¶10. (U) "La Tribuna" and "El Herald" August 29 included endorsements of the San Jose Accord and calls for President Zelaya to be reinstated from the Inter-Parliamentary Union which represents legislative branches of governments worldwide and from the Foreign Relations Ministers of Central America who, with the exception of Nicaragua, have declared that they will not recognize any government that has emerged unconstitutionally.

¶11. (SBU) Comment: With the presidential campaign season officially beginning on August 31, local press has included less front-page stories regarding the aftermath of the June 28 coup. However, the front pages of three of the four major dailies on September 1 carry headlines reporting that Chavez considers Zelaya's return difficult. This fits in with the media's theme of complacency over getting the San Jose Accord signed, and promotes de facto President Micheletti's push to ride out the elections and ignore the coup. End comment.  
LLORENS